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C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 000208

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/03/2016

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SUBJECT: GOG TO INVESTIGATE UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS IN INTERIOR

REF: GEORGETOWN 1349

Classified By: Ambassador Roland W. Bullen. Reason 1.4 (b)

1. (SBU) Commissioner of the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC), Robeson Benn, informed EconOff on February 28 that mine officers and immigration officials will begin inspecting interior mining locations by the second week of March in an effort to identify and regularize undocumented workers. Reports indicate a number of undocumented Brazilians work in the mining industry, and Benn suggested that mining operations that have relocated to Guyana after being expelled from Bolivar state in Venezuela are also a draw for such workers. Guyanese law requires that no less than fifty percent of workers on a mining operation be Guyanese. Benn stated that the GOG has yet to determine how to handle undocumented foreign workers (i.e. Brazilians) at sites exceeding this limitation that the GGMC may find.

2. (C) Benn also corroborated information reported in reftel that a business of immigration brokers purporting to arrange work permits for Brazilian workers flourished under the previous Home Affairs Minister, Ronald Gajraj, who had also removed the GGMC's responsibility for vetting work permit applications. Current Home Affairs Minister Gail Teixeira has restored the GGMC's authority to vet work permit applications.

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